CLAIMS

1.   A probe apparatus comprising:

a first sensor to capture a first value for a first metric on a computer; and

a message generator operative to send a first message to a central site, the message

5   including the first value.

2.   A probe apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a second sensor to capture a second value for a second metric on the computer.

10   3.   A probe apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the message generator is operative to send a second message to the central site, the second message including the second value.

4.   A probe apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the message generator is

15   operative to include the second value in the first message.

5.   A probe apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a timer, the first sensor operative to capture the first value for the first metric when the timer ends and to reset the timer.

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6.   A probe apparatus according to claim 1, wherein:

the computer includes a software package; and

the probe monitors the software package.

25   7.   A probe apparatus according to claim 1, wherein:

the computer includes a database; and

the probe monitors the database.

8.   A monitoring apparatus, the system comprising:

30   a message receiver to receive a first message from a first site, the first message

including a first value for a first metric;

a tester to determine if the first value is acceptable; and

an alerter to alert someone if the first value is not acceptable.

9.	A monitoring apparatus according to claim 8, wherein:

the tester includes a first filter, the first filter defining a range of acceptable values for the first metric; and

the tester is operative to compare the first value with the range of acceptable values for the first filter.

10.	A monitoring apparatus according to claim 9, wherein the tester includes:

a plurality of filters, each filter determining a range of acceptable values for a metric; and

a selector to select the first filter from the plurality of filters based on the first metric in the first message.

11.	A monitoring apparatus according to claim 10, wherein:

the plurality of filters includes at least one filter defining a range of acceptable values for the first metric associated with a site; and

a selector to select the first filter from the plurality of filters based on a first site in the first message.

12.	A monitoring apparatus according to claim 8, further comprising a log, the log including an entry corresponding to the first message.

13.	A system for monitoring software, comprising:

a central computer;

a monitoring apparatus installed in the central computer;

a first computer;

a first probe installed in the first computer; and

a network connecting the central computer and the first computer.

14.	A system according to claim 13, where:

the system further comprises:

a second computer; and

a second probe installed in the second computer; and

the network connects the central computer and the second computer.

15. A system according to claim 13, wherein:

the first computer includes a software package; and

the first probe monitors the software package.

16. A system according to claim 13, wherein:

the first computer includes a database; and

the first probe monitors the database.

17. A system according to claim 13, wherein:

the monitoring apparatus includes:

a message receiver to receive a first message from a first site, the first message including a first value for a first metric;

a tester to determine if the first value is acceptable; and

an alerter to alert someone if the first value is not acceptable; and

the probe includes:

a first sensor to capture a first value for a first metric; and

a message generator operative to send a first message to a central site, the message including the first value.

18. A system according to claim 13, wherein the first computer includes an e-mail server to generate a message from the first probe to the monitoring apparatus.

19. A method for using a probe, comprising:

accessing a first value for a first metric by the probe;

generating a message by the probe, the message including the first value for the first metric; and

sending the message to a monitoring apparatus by the probe.

20. A method according to claim 19, wherein sending the message includes:

delivering the message to an e-mail server by the probe;

delivering the message to the monitoring apparatus by the e-mail server.

21.   A method according to claim 19, wherein accessing the first value includes accessing a software package by the probe.

5   22.   A method according to claim 19, wherein accessing the first value includes accessing a database by the probe.

23.   A method according to claim 19, wherein generating a message further includes generating the message by the probe, the message including the first value for the
10   first metric and an identifier for a site of the probe.

24.   A method for using a monitoring apparatus, comprising:
       receiving a message;
       determining a first value for a first metric from the message;
15   determining if the first value for the first metric is acceptable; and
       if the first value for the first metric is not acceptable, displaying an alert that the first
value for the first metric is not acceptable.

25.   A method according to claim 24, further comprising, if the first value for the
20   first metric is acceptable, logging the first value for the first metric.

26.   A method according to claim 24, wherein:
       determining a first value includes determining the first value for the first metric for a
first site from the message; and
25   determining if the first value for the first metric is acceptable includes determining if
the first value for the first metric for the first site is acceptable.

27.   A method according to claim 24, wherein determining if the first value for the
first metric is acceptable includes comparing the first value for the first metric with at least
30   one acceptable value.

28.   A method according to claim 24, wherein determining if the first value for the first metric is acceptable includes determining if the first value for the first metric is within a range of acceptable values.

5   29.   A method according to claim 24, wherein receiving a message includes:
accessing the first value for the first metric by a probe;
generating the message by the probe; and
sending the message to the monitoring apparatus by the probe.

10   30.   A method according to claim 29, wherein sending the message includes:
delivering the message to an e-mail server by the probe;
delivering the message to the monitoring apparatus by the e-mail server.

31.   A method according to claim 29, wherein accessing the first value includes
15   accessing a software package by the probe.

32.   A method according to claim 29, wherein accessing the first value includes accessing a database by the probe.

20   33.   A method according to claim 29, wherein generating a message further includes generating the message by the probe, the message including the first value for the first metric and an identifier for a site of the probe.

34.   Computer-readable media containing a program to use a probe, the program
25   comprising:
software to access a first value for a first metric by the probe;
software to generate a message by the probe, the message including the first value for the first metric; and
software to send the message to a monitoring apparatus by the probe.

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35.   Computer-readable media according to claim 34, wherein the software to send the message includes:
software to deliver the message to an e-mail server by the probe;

software to deliver the message to the monitoring apparatus by the e-mail server.

36.   Computer-readable media according to claim 34, wherein the software to access the first value includes software to access a software package by the probe.

37.   Computer-readable media according to claim 34, wherein the software to access the first value includes software to access a database by the probe.

38.   Computer-readable media according to claim 19, wherein the software to generate a message further includes software to generate the message by the probe, the message including the first value for the first metric and an identifier for a site of the probe.

39.   Computer-readable media containing a program to use a monitoring apparatus, the program comprising:

software to receive a message;

software to determine a first value for a first metric from the message;

software to determine if the first value for the first metric is acceptable; and

if the first value for the first metric is not acceptable, software to display an alert that the first value for the first metric is not acceptable.

40.   Computer-readable media according to claim 39, further comprising, if the first value for the first metric is acceptable, software to log the first value for the first metric.

41.   Computer-readable media according to claim 39, wherein:

the software to determine a first value includes software to determine the first value for the first metric for a first site from the message; and

the software to determine if the first value for the first metric is acceptable includes software to determine if the first value for the first metric for the first site is acceptable.

42.   Computer-readable media according to claim 39, wherein the software to determine if the first value for the first metric is acceptable includes software to compare the first value for the first metric with at least one acceptable value.

43.   Computer-readable media according to claim 39, wherein the software to determine if the first value for the first metric is acceptable includes software to determine if the first value for the first metric is within a range of acceptable values.

5   44.   Computer-readable media according to claim 39, wherein the software to receive a message includes:

software to access the first value for the first metric by a probe;

software to generate the message by the probe; and

software to send the message to the monitoring apparatus by the probe.

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45.   Computer-readable media according to claim 44, wherein the software to send the message includes:

software to deliver the message to an e-mail server by the probe;

software to deliver the message to the monitoring apparatus by the e-mail server.

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46.   Computer-readable media according to claim 44, wherein the software to access the first value includes software to access a software package by the probe.

47.   Computer-readable media according to claim 44, wherein the software to

20   access the first value includes software to access a database by the probe.

48.   Computer-readable media according to claim 44, wherein the software to generate a message further includes software to generate the message by the probe, the message including the first value for the first metric and an identifier for a site of the probe.

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